

# Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)

Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)

Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT)

## WISE COUNTY/TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP WATER SHORTAGE

### SITUATION REPORT # 33

1230 Hours November 23, 2005

*New Information in Bold Italics*

*Next Conference Call is scheduled for Monday, November 28, 2005, 0930 hours*

*Information for Situation Report should be submitted to the VEOC no later than 1200 hours daily*

### SUMMARY

*The town of Big Stone Gap continues to experience water shortages due to drought like conditions. Actions are being coordinated with surrounding communities and the state to alleviate the adverse conditions. Contingency plans are in place for these actions to continue through November 30, 2005.*

### EXECUTIVE ACTION

**EOC Activation:** The Virginia VEOC is at Increased Readiness condition and augmented with limited staffing.

**State of Emergency:** On October 7, 2005, Governor Mark R. Warner declared a state of emergency to exist for Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to assist these localities in responding to a critical water shortage. Governor Warner directed appropriate assistance be rendered by agencies of the state government to respond to needs in Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to alleviate adverse conditions created by the water shortage. Executive Order 99 (2005) was amended to include an Open Burning Ban on Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap.

**Protective Actions:** Local Emergency Declared: Wise County declared a local emergency on September 26, 2005.

### WEATHER

**Forecast:** Southwest VA: Wednesday 23 November – Mostly cloudy, high temperatures mid to upper 30s, southwest winds 5 to 15 MPH, chance of precipitation 60%. Wednesday night – Mostly cloudy, low temperatures low to mid 30s, west winds 10 to 15 MPH, chance of precipitation 50% with a chance of rain and snow showers after midnight. Thanksgiving Day 24 November – Mostly cloudy and brisk, high temperatures upper 30s to low 40s, west winds 15 to 20 MPH, chance of precipitation 30% with scattered snow showers or isolated rain showers in the morning and afternoon. Thursday night – Mostly cloudy and colder, low temperatures mid teens, northwest winds 10 to 15 MPH, 20% chance of snow showers. Friday 25 November – Partly cloudy, high temperatures low to mid 30s, northwest winds 5 to 10 MPH. Friday night – Partly cloudy, low temperatures mid teens to low 20s. Saturday 26 November – Partly cloudy, high temperatures low 40s. Saturday night – Partly cloudy, low temperatures mid to upper 20s. Sunday 27 November – Partly cloudy, high temperatures upper 40s to low 50s. Sunday night – Partly cloudy, low temperatures low 30s, chance of precipitation 20% with slight chance of rain in the evening and the rain and snow after midnight. Monday 28 November – Partly cloudy, high temperatures upper 40s to low 50s, chance of precipitation 30% with chance of rain in the morning and afternoon

### OPERATIONS SECTION

**Local Liaison:** VDEM Local Support Services Division Region Four Coordinator is in Wise County assisting local officials.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES BRANCH

**ESF 4 – Firefighting:** Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)  
The VDOF has signs in place notifying residents of the burn ban.

**ESF 8 – Health & Medical:** Virginia Department of Health (VDH)  
VDH continues monitoring absenteeism in Big Stone Gap schools. No new cases of chickenpox reported and VDH will continue monitoring chickenpox for additional 14 days. VDH is compiling reports on current and future potential water sources such as the Bullet Mine and water test results are being compiled into a report. Well at Mt. Empire Community College and two wells in Appalachia are to be tested once pumps are activated. ***Environmental Health Specialist monitoring permitted food service establishments to ensure compliance with regulations and plans.***

**ESF 13 - Public Safety & Security:** Virginia Department of Military Affairs/National Guard (VDMA/VNG)  
The VNG continues the blivet support mission. Eleven blivets are in place. ***Effective 25 November number of soldiers on mission will be reduced from twelve to ten.*** VNG developing transition plans for blivet operations and cave operations in coordination with local governments.

## HUMAN SERVICES BRANCH

**ESF 11 – Agriculture & Natural Resources:** Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
Water System Accountability Status, dated 9 November 2005, has been received and reviewed. The report documents identified and corrected leaks and concludes that losses have been reduced by 265,000 gallons since 1 August 2005. This report does not satisfy the requirements of VWP Individual Permit #05-2325 Condition D 4. This condition requires that Big Stone Gap monitor water production (from all sources) and water sales and calculate the amount of unaccounted losses on a monthly basis. Failure to comply with this condition could result in enforcement actions.

## INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT BRANCH

**ESF 1 – Transportation:** Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)  
VDOT has four message boards in the Big Stone Gap area and messages are being changed frequently so members of the community do not become complacent. A VDOT tractor is being used to pull stainless steel tankers of water

## LOGISTICS SECTION

**ESF 7 – Resource Support:** Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)  
The VEOC is coordinating requests for assistance from the locality and state agencies, and is facilitating conference calls with the locality and state agencies. VEOC received request from Big Stone Gap to maintain National Guard support and blivet operations through 31 December 2005. ***Request amended to indicate date of 15 December 2005.*** VDEM/VEOC stressed need for Big Stone Gap to provide specific justification for extension of National Guard and blivet support. VDEM/VEOC stressed that Big Stone Gap needs to develop and implement plans to utilize commercial resources to support operations during recovery operations if they cannot provide justification for extension.

## LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Big Stone Gap submitted request for extension of blivet operations for additional 30 days. ***Request for extension of blivet operations and National Guard support has been amended from additional 30 days to 15 December 2005.*** Current Powell River stream flow is ***30 cubic feet per second.*** ***Outdoor pumping operations have been winterized using shelters with heat to protect from freezing and all systems are being monitored 24/7. Vendor is making modifications to electric pump that was purchased by Big Stone Gap for cave pumping operations and expect to have pump installed 2 December. The Post, Big Stone Gap***

**newspaper, reported on 22 November that local officials estimate the cost spent on the water crisis since late September will approach \$1 million dollars with an official tally of \$976,000 estimated at present. Big Stone Gap extended the leases for the portable water treatment plants through 10 January 2006 and purchased enough additional filter modules for the two portable plants to bring them up to maximum filtration capacity. New filters have arrived and will be installed this week. Wise County and Big Stone Gap in conjunction with VDEM Region 4 Coordinator provided VEOC with requested information on current total water usage, current production and source, water tank storage facilities and capacity, current reservoir level and analysis of alternatives with local recommendations. Detection and repair of leaks in the system continues. Big Stone Gap reported 130 leaks detected and repaired reducing losses by 265,000 gallons per day since 1 August. The Incident Management Team will meet 29 November to discuss long-range plans.** All local governments are encouraged to develop and implement plans for transition of water supply management utilizing only local and private resources.

**Powell River Cave #1 has produced approximately 135,000 – 140,000 gallons of water per day that past few days.**

Prepared by: Mike Gray  
Authority of Michael Cline, State Coordinator  
/s/ Harry Colestock, Operations Director